

Children's and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Briefing Note on the Warwickshire Pupil Reintegration Unit - October 2010

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Warwickshire PRU was inspected on 23rd and 24th June 2010. In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The actions required in order to bring about the necessary improvements are:

- (a) As a matter of urgency, extend the range of strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and reduce significantly the use of fixed-term exclusions.
- (b) Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - increasing teachers' confidence and competence to teach whole classes effectively
 - ensuring that lessons give pupils the opportunity to work in groups as well as independently
 - using assessment data to plan lessons at an appropriately challenging level for each learner
 - ensuring that the activities are enjoyable and engaging
 - extending the availability and maximising the use of information communication technology
- (c) Improve the curriculum at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 so that it effectively prepares pupils academically, personally and socially for a return to mainstream school.
- (d) Ensure that single-roll pupils receive their statutory entitlement to full-time education.
- (e) Monitor and evaluate rigorously the impact of all of the unit's work and use this information judiciously to tackle all areas of weakness.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The fundamental reasons why the PRU was performing so poorly were long standing. The previous Ofsted inspection in 2007 judged the PRU to be performing at a satisfactory level. However, it also pointed to a number of significant weaknesses (such as the low attendance rate) that were not addressed with sufficient rigour. The PRU did not demonstrate enough leadership capacity to make the necessary improvements in the time between the Ofsted inspections. The PRU

Management Committee did not hold the PRU sufficiently to account until the academic year 2009/10 and consequently the monitoring of progress was lacking. These factors contributed to the slow rate of progress. The quality of teaching in the PRU was inadequate. Staff were not shown how to improve their teaching and performance management was lacking. The Ofsted inspection mentioned the fact that staff were not sufficiently skilled in managing pupil behaviour issues.

2.2 The Children's Services Directorate were undergoing a period of change and the Early Intervention Service (EIS) was brought together involving Learning and Behaviour Support Services (LABBS), the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), Education of Children Out of School (ECOS) and the PRU. This possibly deflected energy away from improving day to day provision in the PRU on the scale required. The engagement of schools in this change process was challenging and the ownership of the revised approaches to behaviour and exclusion issues were not always understood and accepted by some school leaders.

2.3 The Joint Area Review (JAR) in 2008 identified the need to address the high permanent exclusion rate in Warwickshire as a priority especially for looked after children and those with a special educational need. It was noted that there was very little integration of pupils from the PRU and mainstream schools. The early intervention service strategy from April 2008 did have an impact on the permanent exclusion rate. See table below. Supporting children and young people to stay in school has benefits for the child and society and avoids the much higher cost of specialist/ PRU provision. A strategy was agreed with the Area Behaviour Partnerships (Headteachers) to use an agreed support process for looked after children that avoided permanent exclusions of this group.

Comparative Permanent Exclusion Rates 2006- 2010

Month	2009-2010		2008-2009		2007-2008		2006-2007	
		Term		Term		Term		Term
Sep	2	16	7	46	6	39	14	56
Oct	3		14		12		9	
Nov	8		19		12		12	
Dec	3		6		9		15	
Jan	9	22	9	20	14	34	10	31
Feb	6		3		13		6	
Mar	7		8		7		15	
Apr	13	37	4	22	16	40	14	39
May	12		8		6		14	
Jun	5		8		12		11	
Jul	7		2		6		10	
Total	75	75	89	89	113	113	126	126

- 2.4 The White Paper, 'Back on Track', brought a heightened focus on the outcomes for children and young people in PRUs. They found limited performance data available but what there was indicated often very poor outcomes. In 2006 only 1% of 15 year olds in PRUs achieved 5 GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent; 11.3% achieved 5 or more grades at A* - G; and 82.1% achieved 1 or more qualification. As part of the drive to improve provision the decision was made by the previous government that the challenging new Ofsted framework in place from 2009 would apply equally to PRUs. Several pilots were established nationally and are expected to report soon with a white paper due in December 2010. This is expected to cover policy on behaviour, attendance, PRUs and alternative provision. One pilot close by in Herefordshire used the funding to develop LSU Pupil support units in the heart of their Secondary Schools. This was a key recommendation of the recent overview and scrutiny task group into exclusion from mainstream schools in Warwickshire.
- 2.5 The LA response to the JAR findings and the Back on Track white paper was to bring the PRU into an integrated Early Intervention Service with a focus on reintegration and support for schools to reduce exclusions. The service was restructured in 2009.
- 2.6 Awareness by both School Performance and EIS leadership that the Warwickshire PRU needed to improve its provision for pupils and was vulnerable to an inadequate Ofsted inspection led to a Partnership Review in November 2009 with intensive support following during 2009-10.

3. Action Taken Already by the LA to Support the PRU

- 3.1 The LA has had concerns for a significant period about standards and achievement and leadership and management. Following consultation with head teachers in the Area Behaviour Partnerships, which recognised the complexity of the organisation, there was a reorganisation of the service in 2008/9 and a refocusing of the work of the PRU. Work was done to modify the curriculum, though there was insufficient time for the structural changes to have any impact. The LA carried out a review of the school on November 2009, led by school improvement officers and an associate inspector. This review made the following key recommendations:
- i. Improve the quality of teaching and learning by eliminating all inadequate teaching and increasing the proportion of good or better lessons by ensuring that lessons are monitored regularly and effectively and teachers are offered support and training as necessary;
 - ii. Develop the use, analysis and evaluation by senior leaders of pupil assessment, tracking and intervention data to inform and drive improvements in provision and pupils' progress;

- iii. Improve lessons by ensuring a good match of tasks and activities to meet the range of abilities in every lesson, including opportunities to develop ICT skills, and to offer good levels of challenge, especially for more able pupils;
- iv. Ensure the principles of Assessment for Learning are applied consistently across all centres, including in marking, so that all pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve;
- v. Ensure specialist knowledge in core subjects is maintained and developed in leadership and management structures to improve pupils' progress in these key basic skills;
- vi. Review the deployment and management of teaching assistants to ensure they have a positive and cost-effective impact on learning and pupils' behaviour.

3.2 As a result the PRU was placed in the category "Notice to Improve (LA)". The LA identified a lead school improvement support officer who worked with the head teacher to develop an action plan to address the recommendations. This garnered support from the Secondary National Strategy Team, an associate school improvement officer for SEN / Inclusion and additional days from the School Improvement Partnership (SIP). The LA carried out follow up review activities in March 2010, and June 2010.

The latter review made these recommendations for further action:

- i. Ensure that the profile of teaching is complete at any given time and is used to set challenging targets for improving teaching;
- ii. Establish a mechanism to clearly collate and summarise data so that it can be used to support lesson planning and the emphasis on personalised learning in lessons;
- iii. Ensure calendared meetings have agenda that can lead to further development in lesson planning including the sharing of good practice seen;
- iv. Carry out further training, as planned, to develop a common understanding of quality in marking and feedback;
- v. Analyse data to determine progress made in English and mathematics is sufficient and set targets to increase the expectations of learning in lessons;
- vi. Analyse data relating to attendance and explore strategies to improve the performance of students;
- vii. Carry out planned visits to monitor consistency across all centres and to ensure curriculum continuity and alignment with mainstream practice;
- viii. Review the management of teaching assistants and provide training appropriate to their needs.

3.3 Since the Ofsted Inspection in June 2010, the following actions have taken place:

- (a) Experience in mainstream schools deemed by Ofsted to require 'special measures' is that the replacement of the normally constituted governing body with a smaller, specially constituted interim executive board, provides a catalyst for step-change in leadership and management. Although the IEB regulations do not apply to PRUs, the local authority has followed a similar approach. The LA has restructured the management committee and agreed a new instrument of governance. This will enable the management committee to perform its functions more effectively and efficiently. The LA will be providing further support to the management committee to ensure that they are clear about their duties in supporting the PRU and reviewing progress. The Chair of the management committee will be responsible for monitoring the impact and effectiveness of the progress of the PRU and will report directly to the Strategic Director - Children, Young People and Families via the Head of Service - Learning and Achievement.
- (b) The incumbent head teacher has resigned with effect from the end of the summer term in a process supported by the LA and they have been seconded to the LA. The LA has appointed an interim head teacher and will provide additional resources to fund these arrangements.
- (c) A detailed report had been commissioned into attendance at the separate centres, using the DCSF 'Securing Good Attendance' framework. The report identified a number of urgent strategic actions for the unit and for the individual sites which are being incorporated into the action plan.
- (d) The interim Head of School Improvement (Principal School improvement Officer - Secondary and Special from 1/9/10) and the Head of the Early Intervention Service (EIS) have met with the wider senior leadership team to discuss the report and the process of being in a category of Special Measures and LA support.
- (e) The Head of EIS has met with the whole staff of the school to discuss the process of being in a category of special measures.
- (f) LA personnel have provided guidance and support to the PRU regarding disseminating information for parents and the media. A letter has been sent out to parents 13th September.
- (g) The principal school improvement officer, the head of EIS, the senior secondary school improvement officer, the school improvement officer (support) and SIP met to consult on the LA plan and programme of support for the school.
- (h) The principal school improvement officer and school improvement officer (support) met with the interim head teacher to further develop the outline action plan on 2^{3rd} September.

- (i) This group led the whole staff training day on 6th September which explained the implications of special measures, discussed the rationale and structure of the proposed LA support and engaged the staff with the content of the plan.
- (j) Secondary National Strategy consultants will continue to provide support to the school.

4. PRU Financial Statement October 2010

4.1 The financial arrangement for the PRU differs from a school as it does not have a delegated budget.

Costs

4.2 It is very difficult to achieve a like for like comparison with other LAs. However a 2007 Best Value Review undertaken by the Local Authority identified that the Warwickshire PRU cost more than similar provision elsewhere. The current PRU **GROSS** budget is £4,560,000 funded as follows:-

Funding Source 2010/11	£000
Dedicated School Grant (DSG)	3,341
Direct Area Based Grant (ABG)	147
Internal Commissions (funded either via ABG or DSG budgets)	298
One –off contribution from School Forum	174
Contributions from Schools having excluded pupils (AWPU Transfer) This is not all AWPU	530
Other minor grants & Income	70
Gross Budget	4,560

4.3 The PRU is forecasting an over commitment in excess of £449,000 for 2010/11. The expenditure consists of:-

Forecast Expenditure 2010/11	£000
Teaching Staff	3,405
Non Teaching Staff	280
Supplies & Services	450
Commissioning	431
Transport (staff and Pupil related)	380
Other	14
Under-achievement of Income	49
Gross Budget	5,009

- 4.4 Included within the forecast expenditure is approximately £180,000 of salary costs for three members of the previous leadership team, who were displaced in the restructuring of a management heavy structure. These staff are now undertaking early intervention work on behalf of the PRU and the Directorate Leadership Team have agreed these supernumerary posts until August 2012. Accommodation related costs of £72,000 are held by the directorate and are forecast to be within budget. Including these accommodation costs, the total gross expenditure figure is £5,081,000 compared to a total budget of £4,632,000, a forecast overspend of £449,000.

Staffing in Warwickshire PRU at the start of the autumn term 2010

Centre	Teachers (full-time equivalent)	Teaching Assistants (full-time equivalent)	Other Staff	Notes
Keresley	13.5*	11.6	3.8	*1.5 unqualified teachers
Pound Lane**	19.8	10	4.2	**includes Seymour Centre
Merttens	6.8	6.4	3.8	
Other	2	0		Head of PRU & Primary Strategic Lead
Total	42.1	28	11.8	
Ill health team	4.2	2.2		
Total	46.3	30.2	11.8	

Pupils in Warwickshire PRU at the start of the autumn term 2010

Centre	Primary	Secondary	Notes
Keresley	5	46	
Pound Lane**	8	44	**includes Seymour Centre
Merttens	3	22	
Total	16	112	

NB Pupil numbers fluctuate significantly throughout the year.

Unit Costs

- 4.5 Although with the status of a school, a PRU is a very different organisation with sometimes much higher overheads. These relate to class size, transport and the personalised curriculum offered. Young people often come in and reintegrate out of the PRU and therefore present quite a different challenge to identify a fixed cost.
- 4.6 Data from the past 3 years' official January census of all schools pupils has registered the PRU with 191 pupils. In broad terms, the gross cost of £5,081,000 thus produces a per pupil cost of £26,600 per pupil.
- 4.7 To compare, Riverhouse School has a formula based budget for 2010/11 of £1,388,000 for 40 pupils, an average cost per pupil of £34,700. The average budgeted cost of a special school pupil within Warwickshire's formula is £16,165, while the average budgeted cost for a secondary pupil is £4,700.
- 4.8 Class size is based on 8 pupils to a teacher, however this will vary depending on the specific needs of the pupils. In the Warwickshire PRU there are students who have returned from out county. This is due to a current shortage of in county Social Emotional Behavioural Development (SEBD) placements. These pupils require one to one tuition and a very high staff ratio when in a group, similar to that of a special school.
- 4.9 Schools Forum funded 17 special 'progression' places for hard to place pupils returning from out of county to Warwickshire.

Inter-Authority Comparisons

- 4.10 Local authorities operate different models of PRU provision, developed to meet local circumstances and in line with local policies. Due to this varied framework cost comparisons between authorities are difficult. However when comparing national returns from LA's (the Section 251 Budget Statement) Warwickshire's spending per capita (i.e. across all pupils in the area) on PRU provision is consistently ranked in the top third of Upper tier authorities as well as our group of statistical neighbours. (7th out of 2, and 3rd out of 11, respectively) i.e. Warwickshire has proportionately higher unit costs per pupil than those of our statistical neighbours.